A PLAIN STATEMENT

OF

FACTS

RELATIVE TO THE ADMINISTRATION

OF

EARL FITZWILLIAM

IN

IRELAND.

London:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD WHITE, NO. 173, PICCADILLY,

1795.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

A

PLAIN STATEMENT

OF

FACTS.

AT ſo alarming a time as the preſent is, not only with reſpect to the fate of Ireland, but perhaps to the fate of the Britiſh Empire, it is moſt eſſentially neceſſary that the true ſtate of the difference which threatens ſo unfortunate a ſciſm between the Engliſh Cabinet and the Iriſh nation, ſhould be perfectly underſtood. The following Statement of Facts is therefore ſubmitted to the public of both countries, that they may be enabled to examine before they decide, and it is offered to them with a perfect confidence, that it contains no one aſſertion, that is not founded on truth.

In July laſt his Grace the Duke of Portland, and ſome of his friends, accepted of places in the Britiſh Cabinet, and the acceſſion of his grace was upon the authority of his own declaration, conſidered to be on the expreſs terms of his becoming inveſted with full power, for the complete arrangement and reformation of every department of Iriſh adminiſtration. Under this idea he prevailed upon Earl Fitzwilliam to accept the Lieutenancy of Ireland, doubting very much whether in caſe of his lordſhip's refuſal he ſhould not undertake it himſelf; ſo convinced was his Grace of the neceſſity of reforming the abuſes of Iriſh government —Lord Fitzwilliam having delayed by reaſon of ſome private affairs to take poſſeſſion of the government of Ireland, found at the end of ſome months, a difficulty of which neither he nor the Duke of Portland were aware. Mr. Pitt queſtioned the terms on which the Duke ſuppoſed and alledged

ledged he had received the department of Ireland. Mr. Pitt having agreed to the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam in July, had written to Lord Weſtmorland, that he was to continue in the government, and found himſelf embarraſſed by oppoſite engagements, and he alſo found the Duke of Portland's claimed powers alledged to have been ſtipulated in July, but denied in October. The diſpute narrowed itſelf principally to two points, the continuation of Lord Fitzgibbon, and the giving a compenſation to Lord Weſtmorland. Both being ſettled, Lord Fitzwilliam came over to Ireland, under certain engagements to certain perſons in Ireland, and with full powers from the Duke of Portland to fulfil theſe engagements, to and with the full knowledge and acquieſcence of Mr. Pitt. Thus had Lord Fitzwilliam, as a ſecurity for thoſe ſtipulated terms, the perſonal faith of Mr. Pitt and of his Grace, even the impoſſibility of the latter's remaining with honour in his place, if they ſhould be violated in the ſmalleſt inſtance.

We ſhall now divide his lordſhip's conduct, in the ſhort period ſince his arrival, under three heads. Firſt—the ſervices he rendered to the empire—ſecondly, his ſervice to the nation;—and thirdly, his arrangements.—— Firſt—he obtained from Ireland the loan of 1700,000l.; taxes to the amount of near 200,000l. for ſeamen 200,000l. army and militia 43,000 men, with the concurrence, ſupport and unanimity of the whole Iſland; a tribute to the empire incomparably better even than the taxes or the army. He made a war in which Ireland had no concern, ſave as ſhe was implicated with Great Britain—a war doubtful in its cauſe, diſgraceful in its conſequences, and indefenſible in its management—palatable, or at leaſt not unpopular to the people of Ireland. He checked the French principle; and made the reform of abuſes more popular than the rights of man. In ſhort he eſtabliſhed a

government

government ſo ſtrong, that in Parliament even the perſons he diſmiſſed could not oppoſe him, and the people without doors were daily pouring in the tribute of their approbation.

Next, his ſervices to the Nation:

He relieved the poor from the tax of hearth-money, which had been talked of and promiſed under a formal adminiſtration, but which in the execution had proved not a relief but a new grievance.

He relieved the brewery from an exciſe, and with it an hoſt of pains, penalties and vexations, which had kept it down for a number of years; and by ſo doing, had forced the people into an indefinite and increaſing conſumption of ſpirituous liquors, to the deſtruction of their quiet, their health, their trade, and their families.

And in aid of that ſalutary regulation he impoſed additional taxes on the uſe of ſpirituous liquors.

He aboliſhed a ſcandalous and profligate police, which had appeared by experience and the public returns, great in expence, in ſecurity nothing, and which had anſwered no other purpoſe than to tax the city, and to diſgrace and corrupt its magiſtrates.

He detected and brought forward abuſes in the expenditure of public money, which appeared for the firſt time to have been expended to the amount of above half a million, without any authority from the King, or any account to Parliament, or any ſanction of the law; and he eſtabliſhed a treaſury board upon the plan of England; originating, checquering and ordering the iſſues of money, and founding in that great branch of government a ſecurity ſo long deſired by the country, ſo long oppoſed by his predeceſſors, Complete Reſponſibility.

He found a treaſury board, for which the nation paid a great annual income, and further purchaſed by ſalaries to the former Vice Treaſurers, a mere ſinecure, and the receipt

ceipt and account in the hands of an officer, who in his own perſon united and extinguiſhed the whole functions of the Treaſury. This board he made effective, and while he obtained ſupplies from the people, gave them the ſatisfaction of ſeeing that theſe ſupplies were frugally adminiſtered, and faithfully applied.

He reſiſted a recommendation of his predeceſſor in favour of a court biſhop, a tool of government, a broker of boroughs, a ſtranger in this country, and an alien to the Univerſity; and he preferred a man who was a native, a member of the Univerſity, a man of piety and learning, and known to him only by his character; and thereby put an end to the practice of making that important employment an expedient of government, or a new aid of corruption.

He reſiſted another recommendation to the office of Secretary of State, in favour of another ſtranger, who had been Secretary to the former Lord Lieutenant for nine months, and reſident little more than two months in Ireland.

He recommended a meaſure which would have put an end to the war of religion, and united all men in the ſupport of government, by giving to them equally the privileges of the conſtitution.

He was alſo in progreſs to reform the many and ſcandalous abuſes that had taken place in the adminiſtration of the government.

Such was the ſtate of Lord Fitzwilliam's ſervices to this nation at the time of his recall.

Thirdly, his arrangements.

He diſmiſſed, but with great compenſation, ſuch perſons as had loſt the confidence of the country, and who were ſo intimately connected with the abuſes of the old government, as to make their removal neceſſary to any reform in the ſame: and in ſo doing he acted with the privity of the Miniſter of England, and by expreſs ſtipulation with the Secretary for the Iriſh Department.

And

And without the ſmalleſt objection from the one or the other, until upon the faith of the promiſed reformation, Lord Fitzwilliam had obtained a ſupply from the Iriſh Parliament, liberal beyond the example of any former period.

Among others there was one removal which is ſuppoſed to have been reſiſted by the Britiſh Cabinet, and has been the ſubject of much converſation; that of Mr. Beresford. This gentleman had been long in the ſervice of the Revenue and of the Crown; he had voted for ſeven and twenty years for every meaſure of every Adminiſtration, however hoſtile or odious to the Iriſh nation, and had acquired ſome influence from being ſuppoſed the devoted agent of Engliſh influence; but having oppoſed the Parliamentary eſtabliſhment of the Conſtitution of his country, and all the reſolutions which had been deemed neceſſary for the acquiſition of a free trade, and having taken in the perſon of his ſon, an active part againſt the Roman Catholics in 1792—and having oppoſed, in the perſon of the ſame ſon, the introduction of the Catholic bill in the laſt ſeſſion, he was thought improper to be continued in the confidence of a government which endeavoured to unite all ranks of people in ſupport of the crown; and his places were of that ſort which made it impoſſible to ſupport him in office and deprive him of confidence. He united in his own perſon, or of his ſon, the different offices of Miniſter, of Commiſſioner of Treaſury, of Revenue, of Counſel to the Commiſſioners, of Storekeeper and of Banker, deſtroying thereby all controul which a Commiſſioner of the Treaſury ought to have over the Commiſſioners of the Revenue; and eſtabliſhing an intereſt in the Commiſſioners of the Revenue to poſtpone the payment of duties in order to increaſe the fees of the ſtorekeeper, and eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of reciprocal combination, inſtead of reciprocal controul. The great quantities of ſtores ſuffered to remain in ſtore-houſes againſt law, at the hazard of the revenue, and to the

certein

certain poſtponement of the payment of the duties, juſtified the apprehenſion of Government from this confuſion of capacities.

There were other reaſons, though not coming to abſolute proof, which made it leſs reputable to continue this gentleman as the Prime Miniſter of the country; but there was one amongſt others which ſeemed to juſtify government in his removal. His family had aſpired to all the powers of government; his brother-in-law was Chancellor, his ſon-in-law Treaſurer, he has endeavoured to make his brother Primate, and he himſelf had the entire control of the Revenue; ſo that the ſyſtem of his family was to monopolize the patronage of the Church, the Law and the Revenue, and by the laſt power to overawe and govern all the mercantile intereſt in the country. It was therefore thought expedient by the Duke of Portland, and thoſe connected with him, that this gentleman ſhould be removed; and the compenſation of his retreat was 3000l. a year for himſelf, with all the places and emoluments which the various branches of his family poſſeſſed. His caſe, however, was thought by the Cabinet a caſe of compaſſion, and it was thought right to break faith with Lord Fitzwilliam, and to reſtore Mr. Beresford to the adminiſtration of the country. The effects of ſuch a meaſure as this to the nation or the empire, no man of underſtanding can be at a loſs to foreſee. It threatens the nation with a continuation, increaſe and aggravation of all the abuſes, which the people from their liberal grants had a right to expect ſhould have been reformed; and it threatens her with a return of that ſyſtem of jobs and inſolence by which preceding miniſters had loſt the confidence of the people; a ſyſtem under which Government had ſold the Peerage, had created fourteen Parliamentary places to corrupt the Commons; had attacked the chartered rights of the city of Dublin;

had

had protected all the abuſes of the Police, and the corruption of the Magiſtrates; had inſulted the Catholic body, and ſet one part of the country in a religious war with the other; under that ſyſtem Government had obtained for the defence of the country a great army, and had embarked almoſt the whole of it for foreign ſervice; againſt a poſitive Act of Parliament had ſent great quantities of the arms and almoſt all the artillery-men out of the country; and had done this, not only ſince but before the militia was completed, and when its eſtabliſhment was a matter of doubt and reſiſtance.

Under this ſyſtem Government had inſtructed the Proteſtant Grand Juries to enter into reſolutions againſt the Catholics; and afterwards being ordered to yield to the Catholic claims, had ſlandered in their prints the characters, and attacked by their proſecutions the lives of thoſe Catholics who had contended with a certain degree of ſucceſs for their freedom.—Under this ſyſtem, public money had been diſburſed to the amount of above half a million as above ſtated, and credit taken for money not paid, and of ſums advanced to the Colonels of new regiments, contrary to the expreſs contract with theſe ſeveral Colonels, and without even a ſecurity for payment, and without any previous authority from the Crown—and ſo very careleſs of the law had that Government been, that a queſtion might ariſe, if public reſentment was equal to public injuries, whether the late Lord Lieutenant might not be impeachable for his conduct. Under this ſyſtem alſo, the Miniſters had diſinherited the Crown by granting away all the great reverſions of the country, after Lord Fitzwilliam had been named to the ſucceſſion, with a view to weaken and undermine his Government.

As

As to the effects of this meaſure of the Britiſh Cabinet upon the empire, it might not be prudent, or perhaps ſafe, to deſcant upon them at large; but ſome of them are too inevitable to be affected by prediction, and others too obvious to he diſguiſed by ſilence.—In former wars, when the Miniſter of England was uſed to conquer France, the value of Ireland was but little, in the preſent moment it is every thing—If Ireland is not with England in this war, England muſt make peace—If the Cabinet of England ſhould take an hoſtile ſtep with reſpect to this country, though ſhe may attain her Parliament, ſhe will loſe her people. The Miniſter who ventures to diſmiſs the Iriſh Lord Lieutenant for reforming abuſes and endeavouring to give emancipation to the Catholics, and who enthrones a revenue officer in his place—loſſes the affection of Ireland, and is anſwerable to Great Britain for the loſs thereof—he has already prevented the counties from arming as in England, perſons of property for their preſervation, becauſe he knows he has injured the country too much to truſt it with arms, though under the authority of the crown and for its own defence.—He has already damped the recruiting ſervice—he has ſtopped the ſubſcriptions for the navy, and turned the attention of the people from a war with France to remonſtrances againſt himſelf—he has turned loyalty into complaint and zeal into reſentment—and in order to force the advancement of an individual poſſeſſing neither the confidence nor reſpect of his country—he has rejected the affections of the Iriſh people. If an Engliſh Miniſter in the moment of difficulty and danger, can hazard the conſequences of ſuch a treatment, what does he not teach them to anticipate from the triumph of proſperity? And in what point of view does he place the connexion between the two nations, if Ireland is led to find a protection againſt the Miniſter in the diſaſters of the empire?

It is neceſſary to make this ſtatement of facts, in order,

Firſt, to juſtify the conduct of Lord Fitzwilliam ſince he undertook the Government of Ireland, and to ſhew it perfectly conſiſtent with what the Empire muſt have expected from his high name and his exalted virtues, and,

Secondly, to explain the conduct and principles of thoſe gentlemen who ſupported the Adminiſtration of Lord Fitzwilliam, and to ſhew that the breach of public and private faith, which has excited ſo univerſal a ferment in the Iriſh nation, or any conſequences which may follow from them, cannot with any juſtice be imputable to him.

The following ADDRESS of the CATHOLICS of DUBLIN, was preſented to MR. GRATTAN by the Gentlemen appointed for that purpoſe, at the meeting in Franciſ-ſtreet, on the 27th of February laſt.

To the Right Hon. HENRY GRATTAN.

"SIR,

"We are inſtructed by the Catholic of Dublin to offer you their humble tribute of thanks and gratitude, as well for the eminent ſervices which you have rendered to this kingdom, on various occaſions, as for your able and generous exertions in their cauſe. It is not eaſy to do juſtice to the merits of a man, whoſe name is connected with the moſt brilliant events of his time; and who has already obtained the higheſt of all titles, THE DELIVERER OF HIS COUNTRY. But though it is impoſſible to add to your fame, by any term we can employ, it muſt be grateful to you to learn, that you have a place, not only in the admiration, but in the affections of your countrymen.

"To be thus loved and admired, is ſurely an enviable diſtinction.—It may not, perhaps, be ſufficient to preſerve or purchaſe ſtation and power at court—but to a well-formed mind it is a ſource of purer ſatisfaction than the favour and protection even of Monarchs or their Miniſters.

"Few

" Few men have had it in their power to do ſo much for their native land, as you have done for Ireland.—When you firſt entered into public life, garriſon habits, and provincial prejudices, where oppoſed to Iriſh intereſts, and feelings; and what was ſtill more diſcouraging the different deſcriptions of people in this country, far from being ready to meet in a common point for their mutual advantage, were kept aſſunder by perverſe and unintelligible antipathies of a religious nature. Into this chaos of contradictions, you infuſed your ſpirit, and brought order in ſome meaſure out of confuſion.

" The firſt effort of your eloquence was to rouſe the Iriſh parliament to aſſert its own independence, and notwithſtanding the habits of ſubjection which particular cauſes had induced, you were ſucceſsful.

" At preſent you are engaged in a purſuit equally honorable to your head, and ſtill more to your heart—As mover of the Catholic bill, you are endeavouring to inculcate the neceſſity of moderation and juſtice, where you before inſpired courage, and urging men who triumphed over foreign ſupremacy, to an act of much greater dignity and difficulty, a ſacrifice of the prejudices of their youth and education.

" In this work ſo full of genius and public ſpirit, and which goes to the creation of a people, as your former exertions went to the forming of a Conſtitution, you have already made a conſiderable progreſs; and when you and your illuſtrious friends were called to the councils of a virtuous Viceroy, we looked with confidence to the accompliſhment of your patriotic intentions.

" Some enemy, however, to the king and to the people has interpoſed his malignant and wicked ſuggeſtions, and endeavoured to throw obſtacles in the way of our total emancipation. But we are far from giving way to

ſentiments

ſentiments of deſpondency and alarm. We feel the juſtice of our pretentions, and we are perſuaded that what is juſt will prevail over the arts of perfidy and falſehood.

" What gives us the moſt ſenſible ſatisfaction, in the general union of ſentiment that pervades all ranks and deſcriptions of Iriſhmen on the preſent occaſion. Never before did Ireland ſpeak with a voice ſo unanimous—Proteſtants and Catholics are at this moment united, and ſeem to have no other conteſt but who ſhall reſent moſt the outrage that has been offered to Iriſh pride in the intended removal of a patriotic viceroy from the government—and you and your friends from the councils of this kingdom.

" For our own part, it ſhall be our ſtudy to cultivate an union ſo happily began. We have no ſelfiſh or narrow views. We dont wiſh to acquire privileges for ourſelves in order to abridge the privileges of others; for we know that in matters of liberty and conſtitution, to give is to gain.

" With regard to the men who may have the hardihood to take the ſituations which you and your friends are about to lay down, if unfortunately for this country ſuch an event ſhould happen, we ſhall only ſay that we do not envy them the ſenſations which they muſt take up at the ſame time. That man's temper muſt be of ſteel, who can hold up his head amidſt the hiſſes of a betrayed and irritated nation.

" As to you and your friends, your departure from power will not diſturb the ſerenity of your minds. The veneration and gratitude of the people will attend you in retirement, and will preſerve you from reflections which muſt be the portion of thoſe who may be your diſmal and melancholy ſucceſſors. Signed by Order,

THOMAS BRAUGHALL, Chairman.
JOHN SWEETMAN, Secretary."

Mr. GRAT-

Mr. GRATTAN's Anſwer:

" In ſupporting you, I ſupport the Proteſtant—we have but one intereſt and one honour, and whoever gives privileges to you, gives vigour to all—the proteſtant alreedy begins to perceive it—a late attack has rallied the ſcattered ſpirits of the country, from the folly of religious ſchiſm to the recollection of national honour, and a nation's feuds are loſt in a nation's reſentment. Your emancipation will paſs—rely on it, your emancipation muſt paſs—it may be death to one viceroy—it will be the peace offering of another; and the laurel may be torn from the dead brow of one governor, to be craftily converted into the olive of his ſucceſſor.

" Let me adviſe you by no means to poſtpone the conſideration of your fortunes till after the war—rather let Britain receive the benefit of your zeal during the exigency which demands it, and you yourſelves, while you are fighting to preſerve the bleſſings of a conſtitution, have really and BONA FIDE thoſe bleſſings.

" My wiſh is that you ſhould be free now—there is no other policy which is not low and little; let us at once inſtantly embrace, and greatly emancipate.

" On this principle I mean to introduce your bill, with your permiſſion, immediately after the receſs.

" You are pleaſed to ſpeak of the confidence and power with which for a moment I was ſuppoſed to have been poſſeſſed.

" When his Majeſty's miniſters were pleaſed to reſort to our ſupport, they took us with the incumbrance of our reputation on, and with all our debts and mortgages which we owed to our country.

" To have accepted a ſhare of confidence and council without a view to private advantage will not meet I hope with the diſapprobation of my country, but to have

accepted

accepted that ſhare without any view to public advntage, would have been refinement on the folly of ambition.—Meaſures therefore, public meaſures and arrangements—and that which is now diſputed, were ſtipulated by us—were promiſed in one quarter, and with aſſurances they were not reſiſted in another.

" In the ſervice of Government, under his Excellency's adminſtration, we directed our attention to two great objects, the kingdom and the empire. We obtained certain beneficial laws—the diſcovery and reformation of certain abuſes, and were in progreſs to reform more—we obtained a great force, and a great ſupply with the conſent and confidence of the people.—Theſe were not the meaſures of courtiers—they were the meaſures of Miniſters.

" His Excellency Lord Fitzwilliam may boaſt that he offered to the empire the affections of millions, a better aid to the war than his enemies can furniſh who have forfeited thoſe affections, and put themſelves in their place.

" So decidedly have the meaſures of Ireland ſerved the empire, that thoſe who were concerned in them might appeal from the cabals of the Britiſh Cabinet to the ſenſe of the Britiſh nation.—I know of no cauſe afforded for the diſpleaſure of the Engliſh Cabinet—but if ſervices done to Ireland are crimes which cannot be atoned for by exertions for the empire, I muſt lament the gloomy proſpects of both kingdoms, and receive a diſcharge from the ſervice of Government as the only honour an Engliſh Miniſter can confer on an Iriſh ſubject.

" I conceive the continuance of Lord Fitzwilliam as neceſſary for the proſperity of this kingdom—his firm integrity is formed to correct, his mild manners to reconcile, and his private example to diſcountenance a progreſs of vulgar and rapid pollution—if he is to retire, I condole with my country—for myſelf, the pangs on that occaſion

occaſion I ſhould feel on rendering up my ſmall portion of Miniſterial breath would be little, were it not for the gloomy proſpects afforded by thoſe dreadful guardians which are likely to ſucceed.—I tremble at the return to power of your old taſk-maſters—that combination which galled the country with its tyranny, inſulted her by its manners—exhauſted her by its rapacity, and ſlandered her by its malice—ſhould ſuch a combination at once inflamed as it muſt be now by the favour of the Britiſh Court, and by the reprobation of the Iriſh people return to power—I have no heſitation to ſay that they will extinguiſh Ireland—or Ireland muſt remove them—it is not your caſe only, but that of the nation,—I find the country already committed in the ſtruggle, I beg to be committed along with her, and to abide the iſſues of her fortunes.

"I ſhould have expected that there had been a wiſdom and faith in ſome quarter of another country, that would have prevented ſuch a cataſtrophe—but I know it is no proof of that wiſdom to take the taxes, continue the abuſes, damp the zeal, and daſh away the affection of ſo important a member of the empire as the people of Ireland; and when this country came forward, cordial and confident with the offering of her treaſure and blood, and reſolute to ſtand or fall with the Britiſh nation;—it is, I ſay, no proof of wiſdom nor generoſity to ſelect that moment to plant a dagger in her heart.

"But whatſoever ſhall be the event, I will adhere to her intereſts to the laſt moment of my life."

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM